



NEWS



August 2009

Building Strong®



WHAT'S INSIDE



GRD Soldier earns staff sergeant rank through battlefield promotion system..... pg 3



Former Gulf Region South Project Manager to receive prestigious award.....pg 5

Umm Qasr Naval Project Vital to Iraq security.....pg 7

Basra Area Office hosts Al Abbas Sewage project kick-off meeting.....pg 9

Class hosted for Maysan Contractorspg 10

Army Corps renovates sports club in Basrapg 11

Site visits—promotions— team involvement and more!

GULF REGION DIVISION SOUTH DISTRICT U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS



Top Left Photo— Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre presents Col. Jeffry Knippel with the Corps colors during the one-hour change of command ceremony at COB Adder's post chapel, Tallil, Iraq. (photos by Alicia Embrey)

Top Right Photo— Staff Sgt. Tiakka Johnson, Staff Sgt. David Engel, Chief Petty Officer Micha Makuch, Sgt. Matthew Rausch and Senior Airman Erica Craig present the colors during the July 9 Change of Command ceremony.



First U.S. Air Force officer takes command of Gulf Region Division South district

*By Alicia Embrey
Gulf Region South*

Tallil, Iraq - The Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq made history July 9 when Col. Jeffry D. Knippel became the first U.S. Air Force officer to command a USACE District. Col. Jack Drolet relinquished command of the Gulf Region South district during a one hour ceremony in the Post Chapel, Contingency Operating Base Adder, Tallil, Iraq. Gulf Region Division Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Michael R. Eyre presided.

Knippel is the 7th South district commander and is responsible for providing engineering and construction manage-

ment services for the Gulf Region Division's largest geographic area. The district currently manages 146 construction projects totaling \$688 million throughout the nine southern provinces of Iraq (64,000 square miles).

"Napoleon declared that 'nothing is so important in war as an undivided command.' I believe there is an incredible opportunity here for us to strengthen the bonds within our joint command and I am confident that this outstanding leader from one of our sister services is the person for the job," said Eyre. "Col. Knippel is one of the Air



Col. Jeffry Knippel returns the colors to Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Sangren while outgoing commander Col. Jack Drolet watches.



BUILDING STRONG®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Tallil, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656



Top Left Photo—GRS outgoing commander Col. Jack Drolet, GRD Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre and GRS incoming commander Col. Jeffry Knippel smile for the camera shortly after the July 9 ceremony. (Photo by Martin McGuire—Aegis)

Top Right Photo—Guests enjoyed ceremonial songs played by the 34th Infantry Band before, during and after the ceremony. (Photo by Alicia Embrey)



Force's finest engineer officers and it is our great fortune that he is joining us."

As he accepted command of GRS, Knippel said, "I pledge to uphold the strongest traditions of the military engineer that are indicative of both of our services. GRS will continue to live up to the proud traditions of the United States Army Corps of Engineers." Drolet, the outgoing GRS commander, built a joint organization of nearly 600 people which significantly improved the lives of the Iraqi people and provided an economic foundation for long-term growth, Eyre said during his remarks about the commander who had served since July 14, 2008. "You and your team helped pave the road to democracy for the citizens of Iraq. With your guidance, the GRS team



After the ceremony attendees were invited to lunch at the Coalition DFAC. GRD Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Prater and GRS's Linda Frey served the ceremonial cake to guests. (Photo by Alicia Embrey)

successfully planned and executed more than two hundred projects," he said.

Knippel comes to Gulf Region South District from the Air Force Center for Engineering and the Environment, Brooks-City Base, Texas, where he

served as the chief, Contingency Construction Division.



GRD Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre receiving the Corps flag from outgoing GRS Commander, Col. Jack Drolet. (Photo by Alicia Embrey)

All stand as the ceremony begins with posting of the colors. (Photo by Alicia Embrey)



About 250 military, civilian employees and contractors, and Iraq dignitaries attended the ceremony. (Photo by Alicia Embrey)



Col. Jack Drolet, Maj. Gen. Michael Eyre and Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Prater enjoying a good laugh after the ceremony. (Photo by Martin McGuire—Aegis)



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656



Staff Sgt. David Halstead is the first GRD Soldier to receive a battlefield promotion while stationed in Iraq. (photos by Alicia Embrey)

GRD Soldier earns staff sergeant rank through battlefield promotion system

By Alicia Embrey
Gulf Region South

Tallil, Iraq – In a July 18 ceremony at the Gulf Region South district headquarters, Contingency Operating Base Adder, Tallil, Iraq, Sgt. David Halstead was promoted to staff sergeant, becoming the first person in the five-and-a-half-year history of Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq to advance under the provisions of the Army's battlefield promotion system.

Distinguishing himself by executing his duties to the full measure of Warrior Ethos and Army Values, Halstead earned the promotion to staff sergeant through the battlefield promotion system, available only to Soldiers serving within



416th Theater Engineer Command Soldiers deployed in support of the USACE-GRS Iraq reconstruction effort applaud when Col. Jeffry Knippel announces the surprise battlefield promotion for Staff Sgt. David Halstead.

Iraq or Afghanistan in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Halstead deployed in 2008 as part of the 416th Theater Engineer Command in support of GRD's Iraq reconstruction effort.

Located on Camp Echo, Halstead's office has 18 active projects worth more than \$56 million spread over three provinces.

"He constantly places the mission first, ensuring that project visits are planned and conducted on time," said GRS Com-



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Tallil, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

mand Sgt. Maj. Michael Sangren during the ceremony. "This requires coordination, planning, and supervision with our private security contractor in conjunction with district headquarters. He is tenacious in problem solving, never accepting defeat."

GRD Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Prater said Halstead's promotion was not only a personal accomplishment but an accomplishment for the division as a whole.

"The competition was at the theater level or the entire country of Iraq, and one of ours was selected," said Prater. "We had to make a determination of the best qualified and Sgt. Halstead certainly was that. Congratulations! It's been a long time coming and a long time overdue."

During his remarks, GRS District Commander Col. Jeffry Knippel explained the significance of the battlefield promotion system.

"The intended purpose of this program is to accelerate and expeditiously promote courageous and extraordinary soldiers who willingly, unhesitatingly accept and flawlessly perform at levels of increased responsibility on the battlefield," said Knippel.



Staff Sgt. David Halstead's family and friends attend the ceremony through a live VTC with the help of the 416th TEC stateside.

"Battlefield promotions are predicated on extraordinary performance of duty while serving in combat or under combat conditions. Soldiers must display exceptional leadership and performance that is expected of the next higher pay grade than they currently hold, clearly distinguishing them from their peers."

Knippel thanked and recognized Halstead's family who attended the ceremony through a live video teleconference with the help of the 416th Theater Engineer Command in Darien, Ill.

Departing GRS Members



Col John Drolet
Commander



James Cullum
Office of Counsel



LTC Steve Moore
FMS / MNSTC-I
Project Manager



Steve Farkus
Project Manager



Dwain Scott
Project Manager



Mitch Peterson
Project Manager



Karen Johnson
Contract Specialist



Robert Williams
Contract Specialist



MAJ Curt Decker
Deputy, E&C Div



Michele Rebmann
Engr. Tech



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656



Steve Farkus looks into Iran from the Iraq/Iran point of entry guard tower, Wasit Province. Farkus will receive the US Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager of the Year Award at the Summer Leaders Conference Awards Banquet and Ceremony in Orlando, Fla., Aug. 3.

Former Gulf Region South Project Manager to receive prestigious award

By Alicia Embrey
Gulf Region South

Tallil, Iraq – He traveled over 65,000 miles, endured potential personal risk and returned with the same infectious smile and attitude he deployed to Iraq with a year ago. "Steve Farkus is an X-PM - Project Manager without the E," said LTC David Berczek Gulf Region South district deputy commander with a smile. "He's an extreme project manager; driven and results



Steve Farkus gave a tour of the \$58.5 million Combat Aviation Brigade Beddown project to engineers from Iraq's nine southern provinces

oriented that's why we nominated him for project manager of the year."

Cited by both Louisville district commander Col. Keith Landry and former Gulf Region South district's commander Col. Jack Drolet for his "commitment to excellence and contagious enthusiasm" Steve Farkus will receive the US Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager of the Year Award



BUILDING STRONG®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Tallil, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

at the Summer Leaders Conference Awards Banquet and Ceremony in Orlando, Fla., Aug. 3 .

Farkus deployed to GRS for a one year assignment as the PM responsible for projects funded through Military Construction Army (MILCON) funding. While deployed at Gulf Region South district (GRS) he was stationed at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Tallil, Iraq.

Farkus managed over \$178M in new construction at six separate Coalition Forces Contingency Operating Bases. "On this year-long deployment I learned what it was like to apply the Corps business practices to our construction projects in a high threat and extreme environment. Deploying to Iraq and helping GRS was really one of the biggest challenges of my life," said Steve Farkus.

While deployed to GRS, Farkus led project development teams to optimum performance levels, achieving over \$100M in construction placement in the first 8-months of FY 09, while enduring the extreme challenges presented by construction in Iraq. "The tempo of our work and the scale of what we had to do felt overwhelming at times, but the great part of the job was there was always a teammate to cover your back" Farkus said.

In making the nomination, Lt. Col. David Berczek, GRS Deputy Commander said that Farkus was selected based on his ability to achieve results. "His continuous customer engagement and keen ability to build the professional relationships necessary to be successful in this environment....."

A strong believer in leadership and mentoring Farkus trained military and U.S. and Iraqi civilians, unfamiliar with USACE and its business

practices on Project Delivery Team philosophy and the project management business processes. "I felt like the reputation of the United States was on the line in the work we were to accomplish in this country, are all representatives of our government. Our Iraqi coworkers needed to see our strong work ethic and good examples of leadership," Farkus said. "It's very critical that we develop tomorrow's leaders today in the Corps of Engineers."



Steve Farkus, Greg Werncke and Joni Hibbard at the Combat Aviation Brigade Beddown project. The project is placing concrete round-the-clock for 75 acres of contingency airfield parking for rotary and medium-load fixed wing aircraft.

Farkus stated, there are so many project delivery team members that added to his success and very difficult to single out one or two. "However the efforts from both Greg Werncke and Greg Croon also deployed to GRS are amazing. Those guys were in the trenches working out all the details with some very big and very complex projects. They solved problems I never even found out about," Farkus added.

Whether deployed to Afghanistan or Iraq he serves with an expeditionary mindset, aggressively seeks opportunities to reach above and beyond what is expected. "Farkus loves what he does and it is reflected in the work he produces and the way he motivates others to strive for excellence," Berczek said. "He is not satisfied with the status quo."

Gulf Region South district stood up in January 2004, one of three district under Gulf Region Division providing responsive construction related services to the Multi-National Forces-Iraq. The South district managing reconstruction projects in nine provinces, an area covering more than 65,000 square miles. GRS manages more than 1600 projects valued at \$3.9 billion, of which 1,361 have been completed to date.



BUILDING STRONG®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Tallil, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656



GRS's Umm Qasr Pier and Seawall resident engineer Navy Lt. j.g. Daniel Gutierrez, explains the construction of the new \$53 million pier and seawall project at Umm Qasr to Air Force Col. Jeffry Knippel and the Officer in Charge of the Basra Area Office, Lt. Col. Humberto Ramirez. (photos by A. Al Bahrani)

Umm Qasr Naval Project Vital to Iraq security

By A. Al Bahrani
Gulf Region South—Basra Area Office

Basra, Iraq — As part of a comprehensive plan to develop the Iraqi navy's capabilities, the Gulf Region Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is partnering with the Government of Iraq by managing a \$53 million pier and seawall project at Umm Qasr.

Funded by the GoI, the new project in southern Iraq will provide the Iraqi navy new port facilities as it continues to expand its military naval capabilities, according to Navy Lt. j.g. Daniel Gutierrez, Gulf Region South district's Umm Qasr Pier and Seawall Resident Engineer.

It includes a 210-meter main pier, two smaller piers, and facilities for power, water and fuel distribution. The project is vital for security in Iraq, according to Iraqi Col. Ahmed

Jasim, the commander of the Umm Qasr Navy Base.



An Iraqi welder fabricates the steel structure for the Umm Qasr pier and seawall project.

"The completed pier and fueling facilities will support new naval vessels being purchased by Iraq," said Jasim. "Together, the new facilities and supported patrol vessels will significantly increase the Iraqi navy's capacity to secure the vital port infrastructure and seaways in Iraq's territorial waters, which are critical to Iraq's security and continued economic development."

On average, the project provides jobs for about 80 local workers daily.

"We consider this a critical project due to its military and economic importance for our country," said Jasim. "We are very pleased the U.S. Army Corps of



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

Engineers is involved because USACE has a very good reputation in overseeing such work."

The Umm Qasr pier and seawall project is 15 percent completed and expected to be finished by the end of this year.

As Iraq strives to build a secure, stable and self-governing nation, the Gulf Region Division has completed hundreds of projects in the transportation and communication sector. Since 2004, GRD has completed eight port projects throughout Iraq.

Construction workers shape rebar for the Iraqi navy barracks project at Umm Qasr.



Departing GRS Members



Avril Jones
Admin Asst.



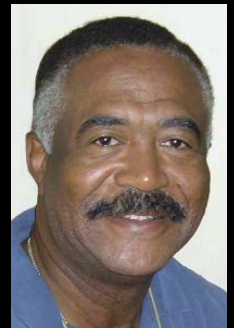
Ira Matthews
Logistics Management
Specialist



LTJg Dan Gutierrez
(Umm Qasr PE)
Basra Area Office



CDR Mark Reynolds
Adder OIC



Art Patterson
PRT Engineer
Muthanna - Dhi Qar



Bart Shivers
Resident Engineer
Maysan Muthanna



Kenny Burford
Project Engineer
Dhi Qar MILCON



Denny Bays
Const. Rep
Dhi Qar MILCON



Dave Weir
Project Engineer
Dhi Qar



David Johnson
Const. Rep
Dhi Qar



BUILDING STRONG®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656



(From left) MAJ. Craig Bowser, PRT essential services team leader, LTC. Ramirez Basra OIC, Dr. Ali Al Hassani, Basra Governor services advisor, Habib Issa, Basra Governor Secretary, Dr. Hassain Kanani, Basra Governor environment advisor, Khadhum Ahamed, Basra Sewage Director General, Robert Vanoer, Basra Area Engineer, Iraqi Contractors, (far left) Art Davey, Construction Rep, Basra Area Office.
(photos by A. Al Bahrani)

Basra Area Office hosts Al Abbas Sewage project kick-off meeting

By A. Al Bahrani
Gulf Region South—Basra Area Office

Basra, Iraq – For a better Basra, Gulf Region South's area office in Basra hosted a kick-off meeting for the Al Abbas Sewage project, on July 6 at the Blackadder Camp, Basra. "We gather here today for a better Basra," said Khadhum Ahamed, Basra Sewage Director General. "This project will help about 10,000 residents of the Al Abbas neighborhood with a cleaner and healthier environment."

Representatives from the Basra Governor's

office, Project Reconstruction Team members, Gulf Region South engineers and contractors attended to discuss the project, hash out issues and provide suitable solutions.



Robert Vanoer, Basra Area Engineer, explains the importance of the project during the work group meeting.

Al Abbas sewage project will provide a combined sanitary and storm sewer system for the residents of the Al Abass area of Basra City. It is hoped that this system will also help to drain the many areas that contain standing water much of which is contaminated with human waste.

"This project will connect most or all of the

houses in the Al Abass area to the new combined sewer network and send all of their



BUILDING STRONG®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

waste water (bathing, washing, toilet, etc.) into the new combined sewer system," said Robert Vanoer, Basra Area Engineer. "It is further hoped that this will help eliminate all of the septic systems that are creating much of the contaminated standing water."

After the Ministry of Municipalities paves all the roads in the Al Abass area, a modern rain storm water collection network will also provide the residents of the area with an efficient system to collect and remove the rain water.

Habib Issa, Basra Governor Secretary, discusses some points about Al Abbas sewage project.



Teaching in the trenches



Thirty-eight representatives from twenty-one different companies attended the one day, two hour solicitation process class held at FOB Gary Owen. (photo by Alicia Embrey)

Class hosted for Maysan Contractors

GRS and the Maysan Provincial Reconstruction Team hosted a Solicitation Process class for Maysan Contractors at Forward Operating Base Gary Owen Aug 2. According to PRT Engineers Maj. Melanie Dugar the one-day, two-hour training drew thirty-eight representatives from twenty-one different Mayan Province companies. "Our goal is to award

projects to contractors in the specified provinces, in order to boost economic development and instill ownership in their communities," Dugar said.

Dugar added that the language barrier is a challenge but it was very rewarding to install hope in the contractors. "A lot of good contractors were identified, they just didn't understand the process," Dugar said.



Maysan PRT Engineer Maj. Melanie Dugar

PRT Engineer Melanie Dugar teaches the solicitation process to thirty-eight would be Maysan Prov., contractors during a one-day, two-hour course at FOB Gary Owen.



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656



Local Iraqis play a game of volleyball at the new rubberized outdoor volleyball court at Shatt Al Arab sports club.

(photos by A. Al Bahrani)

Army Corps renovates sports club in Basra

By A. Al Bahrani
Gulf Region South—Basra Area Office

Basra, Iraq — Ten years ago, Shatt Al Arab sports club in Al Tanoma city in east Basra was an old building.

"Shatt Al Arab sports club was a really unusable building, all the walls and ceilings were in very bad condition, but now everything looks new thanks to the U.S. Army Engineers efforts," said Lateef Khalf, the sports club administrator.

Khalf said the \$300,000 renovated facility provides a place for about 750 members — providing an opportunity for neighborhood residents of different ages to work out and enjoy an array of sports training.

"It's great to see all these young Iraqis benefiting from the amenities the renovated sports club offers .



Members of the Tae Kwon Do team train at the newly renovated Shatt Al Arab sports club. The \$300,000 renovation was managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region Division.

"The rehabilitation work included a new rubberized outdoor surface, new bleachers, new stadium lights, sun shade, new locker rooms, showers and two restrooms," said GRS's Basra Resident Engineer Jim Mills.

Mills also said the facility provides the citizens of Basra a modern stadium to host and watch sporting events like football (soccer), basketball, volleyball and Tae Kwon Do, as well as other sports.

The project renovation began in September 2008, and was com-



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

pleted in April. At the peak of construction, the project renovation provided jobs for about 50 local workers a day.

The Basra Area Office is currently managing an additional 19 projects worth approximately \$110 million.

Lateef Khalf, the sports club administrator, shows the trophies and national and international achievement of Shatt Al Arab sports club.



!!!PROMOTION!!!



Volcheck promoted to Major

On July 31, Capt. John R. Volcheck was promoted to the rank of Major during a re-commissioning ceremony at COB Adder, Tallil, Iraq. GRS Commander Col. Jeffery Knippel administered the oath of office while Volcheck's wife and seven children watching from Royal Air Force Base Alconbury, United Kingdom through video tele conference.

"It was very special for my family to see the promotion via VTC because I've been deployed during prior promotions (without VTC capability) and my younger children have never seen the ceremony," said Volcheck.

"Thanks to Col Knippel and CSM Sangren for pinning on my oak leaves, and a huge thanks to my wife and children for helping me reach this career milestone," Volcheck added.



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Tallil, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656



GRS's Basra Resident Engineer Jim Mills explains ongoing renovation of the holding facility to Deputy for Programs and Project Management Barney Davis, GRS Deputy Commander Lt. Col. David Berczek and GRS Basra Officer In Charge Lt. Col. "Bear" Ramirez during a July site visit. (photos by A. Al Bahrani)



Basra Central Holding Facility renovation provides jobs

By A. Al Bahrani
Gulf Region South—Basra Area Office

Construction is underway on the \$8.8 million renovation/reconstruction of Basra central holding center. The former Fedayeen training camp will be the main holding center of about 1,200 inmates for the southern provinces under the control of Iraq's Ministry of Justice.

Currently the project provides jobs for about 175 local workers a day from construction laborers to carpenters, plumbers, electricians, brick layers, blacksmiths, welders, crane operators, heavy equipment operators, as well as quality control and safety managers, engineers technicians, truck drivers, security guards and all others skilled and unskilled jobs required for the work of construction.

Once the project is completed and operational it will employ nearly 350 employees to maintain and operate the facility.

Checking on progress during the July visit were GRS Basra Resident Engineer Jim Mills, Deputy for Programs and Project Management Barney Davis, GRS Deputy Commander Lt. Col. David Berczek and GRS Basra Officer In Charge Lt. Col. "Bear" Ramirez.



Iraqi construction worker shape rebar for a new building at the Basra Central Prison project. The site consists of 29 buildings (7.047sq. meters) which had been used as military barracks.



Lt. Col. David Berczek, GRS deputy commander signs the visitors book during his June site visit.



BUILDING STRONG ®

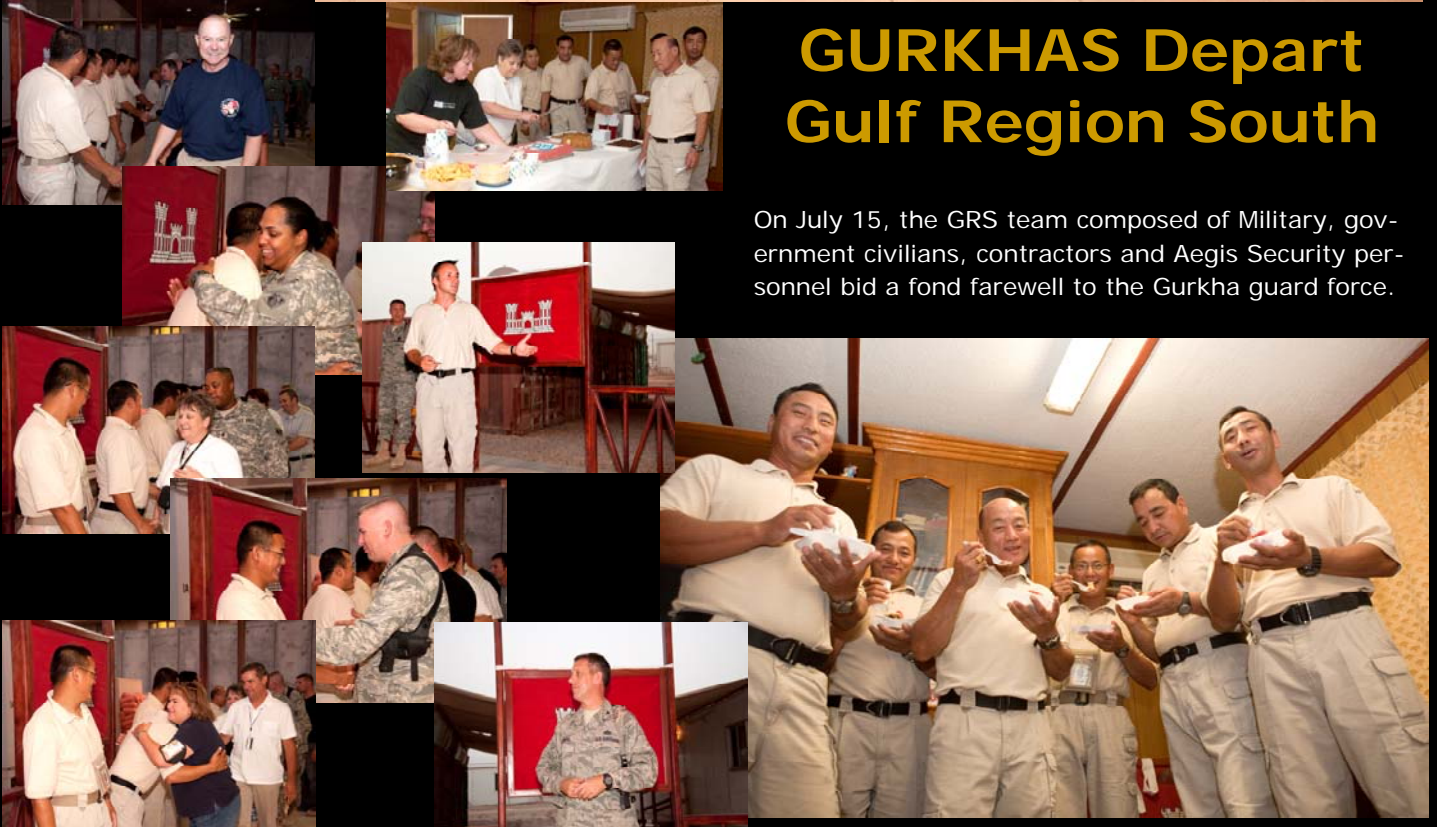
Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

Farewell to our Friends



GURKHAS Depart Gulf Region South

On July 15, the GRS team composed of Military, government civilians, contractors and Aegis Security personnel bid a fond farewell to the Gurkha guard force.



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

Half-a-World Away GRS employees celebrate the Fourth of July



Lt. Col. David Berczek, Deputy Commander



Linda Frey, Admin



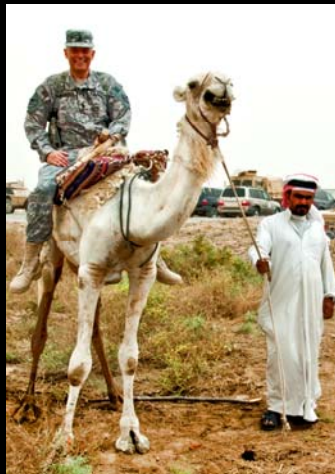
Paul Fowler, IT Specialist



Kathleen Wert, Human Resources/S1



Richard Rupert, Program Analyst



Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Sangren



Col. Jeffry Knippel, GRS Commander

**They spit, they bite, they smell
but getting your picture with a
camel while deployed—
Priceless!!**

While friends and family in the states celebrated the fourth of July with a bang, half-a-world away GRS employees enjoy the day shopping and riding camels at the local bazaar, movies in the day-room, parades and barbecues.



Denny Bays, Const. Rep.



Chris Dening, Project Manager



John Kassebaum, Office of Counsel



Doris Turner, Project Engineer



Dwain Scott, Project Manager



BUILDING STRONG

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

Independence Day Parade—Basra



Lt. Col. "Bear" Ramirez, Navy LT. Daigle, MAJ. Wright, Robert Vanoer and David Hoath. Basra Area Office winning the 2nd place.



Sgt. Anderea Drost, Staff Sgt. Angela Bedessem, Staff Sgt. Jacqueline Cornwell and Spc. Tamarra Dreier participating in the parade with the 34th Red Bull Infantry Division.



Other military units enjoying a little downtime during the Independence Day Parade.



BUILDING STRONG®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
 Talill, Iraq 09331
 alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656



With the temperature hovering around 90 degrees, 340 service members and civilians toe-up to the starting line in front of the MWR House of Pain for the 15-kilometer race. (photos by Alicia Embrey)

GRS soldiers and civilians turnout for second annual Boilermaker 15-km race

COB Adder, Tallil, Iraq - With temperatures between 80-90 degrees at the 5 a.m. start time, more than 340 service members and civilians from COB Adder gathered at the MWR House of Pain to begin the more than 9-mile race on July 11.

Gulf Region South's Sgt. Tiakka Johnson won first place in the Female 25-29 category with a time of 1:19:15.

GRS members joining the race included – Aaron Jolley, Shelly Carter, Michele Rebmann, Dwain Scott, Nelson Reyes, Robert Peel, Sgt. Matthew

Rausch, Sgt. Tiakka Johnson, Lt. Col. Joe Ebert, and Lt. Col. David Berczek.



Sgt. Tiakka Johnson won first place in the Female 25-29 category



Michele Rebmann singing the national anthem before the race begins.



GRS participants arrived before the break of dawn to beat the heat!



GRS employees Shelly Carter, Lt. Col. Berczek, Lt. Col. Joe Ebert, Sgt. Tiakka Johnson, Michele Rebmann, Robert Peel and Sgt. Matthew Rausch staging for the race!



Aaron Jolley still smiling at the 13-km marker.



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Tallil, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656



Shelly Carter, Const. Rep, pitches the ball to Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Sangren while Michele Rebmann, Engr. Tech, plays catcher and Sgt. Matthew Rausch calls the shots. (photos by Alicia Embrey)

Play Ball

GRS employees enjoying a little fun time at 7 a.m., before the heat sets in.



Team members cheer as Solomon Curry, Transportation and Facilities Manager clears home base.



Robert Peel, Program Analyst and Lt. Col David Berczek, Deputy Commander



Maj. Gerald Himes, Deputy, E&C Division



Robin Encarnacion, Engr. Tech and Barney Davis, Chief Programs & Project Management Division



Linda Frey, admin and Col. Jeffry Knippel



Cheyenne Hollow Horn, electrical engineer, Maj. Gerald Himes, Deputy E&C, and Robin Encarnacion, Engr. Tech



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656



Dr. Ahmed Kasim, Basra Children's Hospital director, and HD Cannington, IMC Hospital Integrator discuss the hospital's path forward. (photos by Alaa Bahrani)



Children's beds ready for use at the Basra Children's Hospital.



Infants beds staged for the first to be treated.

Basra Children's Hospital working group holds first phase meeting

Preparing To Move-In!

By A. Al Bahrani
Gulf Region South—Basra Area Office

The \$165 million Basra Children's hospital is just one phase closer to becoming a reality. The hospital working group met July 23 at the Provincial Reconstruction Team/Resident Engineer Office Compound— Camp Basra to plan the four phase procedure.

The initial phase will begin in mid August with a staff introduction to the hospital's procedures and move in. In October phase two will begin with outpatient services providing - outpatient specialty clinic, outpatient pharmacy, diagnostics radiology, laboratory, MRI, CT, fluoroscopy and

laundry. Phase three begins in February 2010 with inpatient oncology services; dental clinic, oncology clinic, chemotherapy, surgery theater, emergency room, endoscopy will be open to the public. Following these three phases comes the final phase when the hospital radiation oncology will be fully operational.

In 2003 Project Hope evaluated the Iraq healthcare system and found the cancer rate was ten times higher than in western countries.

"Southern Iraq's cancer rate was even higher than their national average," said GRS's Basra Children Hospital Office resident engineer, Gerald Ramos.

"At Basra University the current registered ratio of cancer cases is 70/100,000 per year,



Basra Children's Hospital working group met at PRT/ REO Compound— Camp Basra 23 July 09.



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656



GRS Deputy for Programs and Project Management Barney Davis, GRS Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Sangren, GRS Commander Col. Jeffry Knippel and Basra OIC Lt. Col. "Bear" Ramirez, listen during the BCH first phase meeting.

Boxes of supplies are arriving for the new kitchen at the Basra Children's Hospital.



Easy flowing hallways and patient's admission area are ready.

compared to 40/100,000 in 1995," said a cancer specialist at Basra Hospital. He added that the incident rate of current cancer cases increased to reach the rate of 105/100,000 of the population of the governorate of Basra. In general Basra, Maysan, and An Nassiriyah show that they have the highest risk, compared to other parts of Iraq.

The hospital is an example of U.S. – Iraqi partnership under the Strategic Framework Agreement to provide critical and essential services to the Iraqi

people. The United Nations Development Fund is participating through a \$22 million grant from the Government of Spain; more than \$9.8 million in funding from the Iraqi Ministry of Health, and Project Hope is providing more than \$30 million for medical equipment and medical staff training.

Basra Children's Hospital will have a total of 63,360 square feet. The two-story medical facility is designed as a 101-bed

tertiary care referral center with a focus on pediatric oncology.



Faris Najim, chief of the technical department, Basra Health Directorate, Haider Sabber, Head Nursing, Basra Children Hospital.

WHO'S YOUR BUDDY?

When leaving the compound—
beware of your surroundings....

*Think Safety...
Take a buddy!*



BUILDING STRONG®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

Basra Area Office delivers friendship soccer balls



Lt. Co. "Bear" Ramirez, Col. Knippel, Sgt. Sangren and Art Davey present soccer balls to Iraqi children in Al Qubla neighborhood in Basra 22 July 2009. (photos by A. Al Bahrani)



Col. Jeffry Knippel was warmly welcomed by the Al Qubla neighborhood children.



Basra City, Al Qubla neighborhood children playing with the soccer balls.

Soccer balls net smiles and enforce commitment

By A. Al Bahrani
Gulf Region South—Basra Area Office

Soccer balls bring smile to ten Iraqi children in Al Qubla neighborhood of Basra city July 22, thanks to the generosity of the Gulf Region South Basra Area Office.

"For most of my life I have been involved in sports one-way or the other as a player and as a coach," said Maj. Edward "Coach" Wright, Basra Area Office XO/Operations/MND-S LNO who sponsored for the soccer balls and purchased them from the local markets in Basra. "I realize the impact that sports has on the attitude of people especially young people."

Coach said that being able to give out some balls to kids is the best way to share friendships and build a common bond with the US Army Corps of Engineers and the community. "As the security gets better more and more kids are playing in the

city in open areas and these balls can carry the message that we are here as friends. We want to see the young people of Iraq have fun and play," Coach said.



Lt. Col. "Bear" Ramirez hands soccer balls to Iraqi Kids.

"I felt a sense of joy and delight being able to deliver a small gift to the children of Basra," said Lt. Col. Humberto Ramirez, Basra Area Office Officer in Charge. "The children are very friendly and appreciative of the gifts we presented to them."

"The happiness in their faces and friendliness towards us was very emotional and enforces our commitment to the citizens and children of the city of Basra. The con-

struction and reconstruction projects we do for the city will improve the quality of life of the children and the future of Basra. These improvements are lifelong and lasting improvements."



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

FORAT AREA OFFICE-PROJECT UPDATE

Mussayib Maternity Hospital



Mussayib Maternity Hospital due to open this fall. (photos by Combat Camera)

Getting it right! It's the final touches that make the difference. Construction Rep. Victor Aquino ensures everything is just right—even the spelling.



Dr. Lang takes a stroll outside of the hospital.

Putting the final touches on Mussayib Maternity Hospital



GRS's Forat Area Office Area Engineer Mike Abate, Engineer and Construction Chief Dr. Larry Lang and Construction Representative Victor Aquino checked the construction progress during a July site visit.

Final touches are being added to the new \$5.2 million Mussayib Maternity Hospital in Babil Province due to open this fall. The project has employed hundreds of local Iraqis and is essential in ensuring that thousands in the Mussayib community and surrounding area has a reliable state-of-the-art health-care facility.

The 50-bed hospital includes an emergency room, outpatient area, operation theaters, administrative wing, doctors' residence, reception area, wards, x-ray, laboratories, nurse stations, and pharmacy.



Forat Area Office Area Engineer Mike Abate looks out the window at the old hospital across the street.



Local contractor preparing a birthing bed.

GRS's Engineer and Construction Chief Dr. Larry Lang, Forat Area Office Area Engineer Mike Abate and Construction Representative Victor Aquino checked the construction progress during a July site visit.

The project is currently 95% complete.



Dome ceiling signifies the 9-months of labor.



BUILDING STRONG®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

FORAT AREA OFFICE-PROJECT UPDATE

Al Mashro'o Primary School



Al Mashro'o Primary School is currently 68% complete. (photos by Combat Camera)



One of 100 local Iraqi's working on the new school.



Construction worker laying tile.

Al Mashro'o Primary School taking shape

The new \$970,000 Al Mashro'o primary school in Babil Province is taking shape and is scheduled to be completed this summer.

Over 100 local Iraqis are on the construction crew. Apart from 12 classrooms, the project includes an administration wing, playground area, toilets, and walkways.

Among those stopping by to check on the progress were GRS's Engineering and Construction Chief Dr. Larry Lang, Forat Area Office Area Engineer Mike Abate and Construction Representative. Victor Aquino.

The project is 68% complete.



Administration wing of the new \$970,000 Al Mashro'o primary school.



Local Iraqi construction worker placing brick.



Local Iraqi construction workers preparing the floor for new tile in the administration wing of the new school. The school is expected to open this fall.



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

CAMP ECHO-PROJECT UPDATE

Al-Tammem Road Repair



Resurfacing of 36 streets in the neighborhood of Al-Tammem.

Paving the way in Qadisayah Province



Streets before resurfacing cluttered with debris and holes.



Community members watch as contractors resurface the road.

GRS's Construction Representative's Earnie Mendenhall, Barry Campbell and Mitch Mosler at Camp Echo are busy paving the way to good community relations with the resurfacing of 36 streets in the neighborhood of Al-Tammem Qadisayah Province.

Working together the Qadisayah Municipality, GRS Engineers and contractor are one step closer to completion to a safe and healthier community. The \$2.17 million project began in August 2008 and is scheduled for completion by September 2009.



BUILDING STRONG®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656

Arriving GRS Members



Chris Dening
Project Manager
GRS HQ



Henry Melendez
Project Manager
GRS HQ



MAJ Gregory Reich
Project Manager
GRS HQ



MAJ Gerald Himes
Deputy, E&C Div
GRS HQ



Navy LTC David Daigle
Project Engineer
and PRT Liaison
Basra Area Office



LTC Nathan Joseph
OIC
Forat Area Office



William Wilkinson
IT Specialist
Forat Area Office



Charles Major
IT Specialist
Basra Area Office



MAJ Andrew Staiano
OIC
Camp Delta



LCDR Yves Reme
OIC
Adder Area Office



Robert Moody
Resident Engineer
Maysan/Muthanna
Resident Office



BUILDING STRONG ®

Gulf Region South District . Public Affairs Office
Talill, Iraq 09331
alicia.embrey@us.army.mil or 540-665-2656